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AUTHOR Sears, James T.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This paper is an interim report from a six-year study of the Bridenthal Internship in Teaching (BIT) program; an innovative, reform-oriented teacher education program. The data discussed in this paper were collected during the program's "acclimation" phase (1984-1986) experienced by 17 high ability young people, the Bridenthal Interns, who were carefully selected for training and retention in the teaching profession. Periodic audio and video-taped interviews were conducted with participants, parents, staff, and faculty. Several instruments which were designed to gauge career interest, maturity, and value orientation also were administered. Additional data were collected through interns' personal journals, classroom observations, paper-and-pencil instruments, and analysis grounded upon previously collected qualitative data. This paper has four major objectives: (1) to describe the most salient features of the BIT program; (2) to identify specific characteristics (e.g., the need to maintain an association with a special group) and attitudes (e.g., commitment to teaching) of the interns; (3) to elaborate on the changes in those characteristics and attitudes during the acclimation phase and in light of their unique preservice teacher education curriculum; and (4) to raise critical issues relevant to recruitment and training in teacher education. (Author)

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INVESTIGATING MODEL TEACHER EDUCATION REFORM:

ACCLIMATION--ENTERING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

James T. Sears
Assistant Professor
Educational Leadership & Policies
Wardlaw 230
University of South Carolina-Columbia
Columbia, SC 29208

Amy Otis-Wilborn
Assistant Professor
Department of Exceptional Education
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, WI 53201

John D. Marshall
Assistant Professor
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
National College of Education
Evanston, IL 60201

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an interim report from a six-year study of the Bridenthal Internship in Teaching (BIT) program; an innovative, reform-oriented teacher education program. The data discussed in this paper were collected during the program's "acclimation" phase (1984-1986) experienced by seventeen high ability young people, the Bridenthal Interns, who were carefully selected for training and retention in the teaching profession

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This paper has four major objectives: (1) to describe the most salient features of the BIT program; (2) to identify specific characteristics (e.g., the need to maintain an association with a special group) and attitudes (e.g., commitment to teaching) of the interns; 3) to elaborate on the changes in those characteristics and attitudes during the acclimation phase and in light of their unique preservice teacher education curriculum; and 4) to raise critical issues relevant to recruitment and training in teacher education.

OVERVIEW

In 1984, the Bridenthal Foundation, in conjunction with the department of education at Calvin College located within a major metropolitan area in the southwest,[1] implemented a unique teacher training demonstration program. This project was designed to model many of the reforms discussed in the field of teacher education during the early eighties.[2] This model program has been discussed on CBS television's "Good Morning America" and was the focus of a recent NBC television special about teacher education. Additionally, the program has been described in a wide array of publications and televised programs.[3]

The Bridenthal Internship in Teaching (BIT) program called for the recruitment, training, and retention of "highly qualified" young people for the teaching profession. A group of fourteen women and three men was selected to participate in this six year, experimental program. As "Bridenthal Interns," these young people progress through the "normal" academic curriculum at Calvin College and, in addition, benefit from a BIT-specific curriculum.

Calvin College is a small, private institution which features an academically oriented curriculum. In the past five years, the college has made great efforts to expand their liberal arts curriculum and to deemphasize professional teacher training. The Bridenthal Internship in Teaching program, therefore benefited from a broad liberal arts foundation in addition to the specific teacher training curriculum.

The BIT program consists of three major phases:[4]

The Acclimation Phase (Fall 1984 - Winter/Spring 1986)

Interns meet frequently as a group, attend special seminars and education-related functions, and participate in a number of practicum experiences in surrounding schools. A mentor is assigned to help them in their adjustment to the program and to the college.

The Specialization Phase (Spring 1986 - Spring 1988)

Interns pursue specific coursework toward their chosen teaching fields and become integrated into Calvin College's standard teacher education program.

The Professionalization Phase (Fall 1988 - Spring 1990)

After graduation, interns serve a two-year apprenticeship as classroom teachers in a local school district. Close working relationships between the College and education faculty and the interns continue.

Following successful completion of the third phase, the interns' loan of $26,000 is forgiven. If, at any time, an intern chooses to leave the program, he or she is required to pay the debit accrued to that point in full.

METHOD & PROCEDURES

The study, conducted by a three member, independent research team, employs a multi-stage design and a complementary combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.[5] This section of the paper describes the various data collection methods employed during the acclimation stage (1984-1986) of the BIT program.[6]

Interviews were conducted with the participants in the Bridenthal program at the beginning and end of their freshmen year, and mid-way through their

sophomore year. During the Fall of 1984, private, individual interviews were conducted in private lasting approximately 60 minutes. Additional interviews were conducted with participants' parents and program faculty. Through the interviews, baseline data were gathered on such matters as program expectations, commitment to teaching, and career choice. At the mid-way and end points of the first years, each participant again was interviewed to collect impressionistic data relative to their being Bridenthal Interns and Calvin College students. One large group interview was also conducted with the interviews at the end of the first year (Spring, 1985).

Beginning in the second year, all interviews were video-taped and audio-taped. Videotaping provided an enhanced record of what transpired during an interview and was particularly valuable for capturing the nuances and unspoken messages and interactions which occurred during the discussion. Like the first year, the interns took part in three interviews. During the second year, however, the interview structures (i.e., individual, small group, large group) and methods (i.e., in-person, telephone) were purposefully varied. Interview protocols also became less static, mirroring changes in the program, participants' perceptions, and our emerging hypotheses. Finally, video-taped interviews were conducted with program staff and faculty who either worked regularly with the interns or who had one or more of the interns as students in their education courses.

Another substantive change in the research design occurred at the end of the second year (Spring, 1986) with the addition of a cohort group (N=11). This group was selected from the pool of students at Calvin College attending an introductory education class for persons considering entering teaching as a

profession. These students were interviewed using a protocol modified from the original (1984) entry interview. (Note: In a sense, these students had reached a point in their program where they would "declare a major" and thus corresponded to the Bridenthal participants' Fall, 1984 career entry point.)

Informal interviews were conducted regularly with the interns during social, academic, and professional occasions by one person who served as the on-site researcher. During these conversations additional questions and issues emerged, and some structural corroboration of other data was provided. Interviews conducted in conjunction with classroom observations were most effective in picking up contextual cues and juxtaposing personal observations with participants' interpretations.

Throughout this study, participants were assured of anonymity. Pseudonyms, therefore, are used throughout this paper. Quotations attributed to participants have been altered only in cases of serious grammatical errors, to enhance clarity, or to assure anonymity.

Survey data were used to check the adequacy of preliminary analyses and interpretations of qualitative data, to point toward fruitful avenues for further investigation, to test the theoretical constructs developed from the data previously analyzed, and to examine the extensiveness of the patterns suggested by qualitative analysis.

Data gathered from the first sets of intern interviews were used to construct two paper-and-pencil instruments. These were completed at the end of their second year. Modified versions of these instruments were also completed by the cohort group at the same time. These surveys consisted of Likert-type attitudinal items as well as open-ended questions.

Data also were gathered from four standardized instruments: The Self-Directed Search (SDS), a vocational counseling tool that, among other information, provides a summary code keyed to a specific occupation that matches with self-assessed skills and interests (Holland, 1985); The Career Maturity Inventory (CMI), whose most common application is to screen individuals who are immature in their career decision-making process (Crites, 1978); The Survey of Personal Values (SPV), used here as a means of identifying the values patterns of the interns as a group (Gordon, 1984); and, The Survey of Interpersonal Values (SIV), designed to gauge the values that respondents attach to relationships with other people (Gordon, 1976). These instruments were administered to each group upon entry into teacher training. Both the intern and cohort groups completed these instruments.

Non-participant and participant observations were conducted with the interns in academic, social, and professional settings. Members of the research team observed these students during their weekly education seminars and interactions with other students within regular education classes. Non-participant observations also were conducted during formal receptions, informal social outings, and presentations at national conferences. Field notes were taken during these events. Additionally, participant observations were conducted during the researchers' summary reports to the interns (these data are collected through videotaping) and in a course with a field experience component directed by one member of the research team.

Documents and records provided another important set of data. During the first year, each intern was asked to maintain a personal diary. Fifteen of the seventeen interns contributed these personal recordings of their feelings,

thoughts, and experiences of being a Bridenthal Intern. Protfolios of teaching-related academic work were maintained by interns the second year. Calvin College documents relating to teacher education and the BIT program were studied and academic records of the interns were also available for review.

Data analyses were largely iterative given the multiple researchers, the nature and forms of the data themselves, and the various phases of analyses. Each member of the research team conducted an independent, preliminary analysis of the data. Following these analyses, the research team met for a week of intensive discussion. From these sessions, (1) tentative working hypotheses were accepted or rejected, (2) data were "layered" as relevant themes emerged, and (3) directions for the following year of data collection were established.

Through the use of survey methodology, interpretations generated from previous field work were either supported or refuted. Data generated from surveys also were the basis for further ethnographic study. Through this process of triangulation, additional insights into previous observations occurred and validity and reliability were enhanced (Erickson, 1977; Sieber, 1973).

In studying this experimental university program, analytic induction[7] was used. Through a systematic review of the field research, data were grouped into categories. The categories were examined in order to discern what patterns, if any, existed within and between categories. As patterns surfaced, alternative explanations for them were generated. These explanations were related to social, organizational, and educational theory.

Based on the commonalities and discrepancies yielded from this analysis, an interpretive theoretical framework was developed which seemed best to fit the data. Eventually, the most reasonable interpretations were selected and woven together thematically. These thematic keys became the organizational framework within which data from this study have been presented in the annual research reports (Sears, Moyer, & Marshall, 1986:32-54; Marshall, Sears, & Otis-Wilborn, 1987:78-89).

Throughout the study, all audio-taped interviews were transcribed and standard analytical methods were used. Video-taped data were evaluated using a frame-analysis technique; journals, portfolios and observations were systematically categorized and analyzed (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The paper-and-pencil and standardized instruments were analyzed using traditional statistical techniques.

PROGRAMMATIC FEATURES (Fall, 1984-Winter/Spring 1986)

Recruitment

Touting a large scholarship package and seeking high-ability high school seniors, Professor John Wright, the program's originator and director, hoped to produce a new breed of teacher who would restore the status of a maligned profession. The key, in his mind, was recruitment:

> We simply have not spent much time thinking about recruitment. We recruit halfbacks. We recruit oboe players. But we don't recruit teachers. We sit back in our colleges and universities and wait for them to appear.

An intensive media campaign was waged through local newspapers and school districts. Wright personally telephoned each principal of the 35 area high schools asking if they would help with his recruitment efforts. He organized a ceremony at which the President of Calvin College announced the program. Area school principals, counselors, and teachers were in attendance along with the local news media.

One hundred high school seniors responded to the initial call for applicants, and 60 made it through the first round of screenings. The selection process was competitive; candidates were expected to have SAT scores of 1000 or higher (the entering SAT freshmen score at Calvin College was 1100). Wright, however, required more from the potential candidates. "You've got to look for tenacity, commitment. Some bright kids don't do well in college. They don't have the bottom, like they say with horses, to see it through." To ascertain whether applicants offered the desired set of qualities, two additional interviews were held with each candidate, including one with the candidates' parents. Finally, seventeen were selected.

The recruitment of these students <u>into the program</u> ended when the interns and their parents signed the papers that committed the students to the program and the financial contingencies. Their recruitment into the profession of teaching, however, had just begun: this point marked the beginning of the acclimation phase of the program.

The interns, recruited from the top five percent of their graduating classes, included several in Who's Who Among American High School Students; a National Merit scholar, a class valedictorian; more than a few National Honor Society members; regional and national award winners in areas ranging from

Spanish and history to drill team and choir. Generally, these seventeen young men and women described themselves as "high achievers" who were "privileged" to be part of a unique program. Most interns saw their high school success in academics and extra-curricular activities as the key to their acceptance into the Bridenthal program. Several added that their commitment to teaching or their performance in the selection process might have created a favorable impression. Additionally, every intern indicated that, regardless of their acceptance into the BIT program, they would have pursued a college education. Moreover, about one-half of these indicated that they would be attending Calvin College. Eight said they would still be education majors; seven felt they would be majoring in some other field; two were not certain.

Although Calvin College relied heavily upon high school guidance counselors and principals to identify these future teachers, only one intern noted that persons in either of these positions were important in their decision to apply for the program. The primary influence in the interns' decision to enter the BIT program and consider teaching as a career was the program director, Professor Wright. The second most influential person or group was the interns' high school teachers. While some of these future teachers were approached because of their interest in teaching or perceived characteristics of a "good teacher," others were encouarged to enter the competition simply because they met the eligibility criteria or because of their interest in attending Calvin College. During the interviews, many mentioned teachers who were positive role models in their lives; nine noted that a teacher directly influenced their application to the program. These

teachers, too, responded positively to the interns' acceptance into the program.

More than half the interns disclosed that one or both parents reacted less than positively upon first learning of their child's interest in the program. These parents questioned the wisdom of their teenagers' career choices and emphasized the instant financial burden their daughter or son (and they as parents) would incur should a decision to leave the program prior to the end of the six year commitment be made.

When asked what other careers they had considered prior to entering the BIT program, careers in the "helping professions" (e.g., nursing, social work) were cited three times as often as other possible career areas. All but four of these "brightest and best" had seriously considered non-teaching careers such as law, psychology, and engineering.

The two primary attractors for entering teaching, cited by interns at their entry point into Calvin College, were the opportunity to interact with others, particularly children, and a sense of educational mission. At the end of their first year, only one powerful attractor was echoed over and over: the desire to revitalize teaching and reform the profession. These tasks, the interns believed, were ones in which they would be uniquely qualified because of their own interest, talents, and specialized training.

During the extended conversation with each intern at the beginning of the first year, it was clear that interns were motivated to choose teaching as a career for a variety of reasons and that, although financially and personally committed to the BIT program, their long-term commitment to teaching was not as strong. Table 1 plots and characterizes each intern with respect to their

expressed commitment to teaching and their original intent regarding the selection of teaching as a career choice.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Eight interns had seriously considered teaching as a career prior to the program. These students, the Traditionalists, are those typically drawn to teacher education programs. Had this program not existed, these students probably would have pursued a degree in education at Calvin or at another institute of higher education. While this group constitutes nearly one-half of the intern group, without their participation in this program some of these talented students might have been lured away from education into more attractive fields of study at the college.

The second largest set of students were those for which the program was expressly targeted. These four students had never considered teaching as a career and, at the time they entered the program, had a rather weak commitment to classroom teaching for any length of time. These students, the Mavericks, would be the program's critical test for its claim of retention in teaching.

Three other interns, like the Mavericks, had not considered teaching a legitimate career choice prior to the inception of the BIT program. Unlike the Mavericks, however, the Converts already were expressing a long-term commitment to classroom teaching during their entry interviews. For the Converts, the program was a catalyst for examining their career choices. After examining their interests and the opportunities the program provided, these interns committed themselves to teaching.

The latter two groups demonstrated the program's effectiveness in recruiting talented youth who probably would have pursued other careers. The last group, the Reservationists, may prove to be the program's greatest challenge. The intern within this category had examined teaching as a career prior to the inception of the program but remained uncertain about the wisdom of the career choice as the academic year began.

A descriptive statement of each career orientation is listed below:

TRADITIONALIST: "The need to teach is inside me. I has always been there for as long as I can remember." Asked what they would be doing at age 30, those interns responded by talking about the joys of classroom teaching, their hopes of raising a family and becoming "settled."

MAVERICK: "I had not considered teaching a prime option. Even though I'm going to be a teacher for two years, it'll give me a good basis so that I can go into college and get a higher degree. I won't forget where I came from."

CONVERT: "I had never looked into being a teacher. I didn't know really what I wanted to do. I had to sit down and take a good look at myself. I decided to apply and to see what happened. The more I read, the more I wanted to be a teacher."

RESERVATIONIST: "It's hard when you're growing up and your parents and your teachers and everyone tells you, 'Oh, you're so smart you can do anything you want.' I have so many choices. What do I choose?"

At the beginning of the first year, the interns, not surprisingly, echoed the program's early public relations releases when describing the program. More than half the interns viewed the program as a way to attract "top ranked"

high school students into teaching and nearly half felt the program was going to play an important role in educational reform. These interns expressed an awareness of the historical significance of the program, often referring to themselves as "guinea pigs" who, because of their participation in the program, were "at the forefront of an educational revolution."

Group Development

The single most important component of the program throughout the acclimation phase, from the interns' perspectives, was the presence of a support group. This perception of the group changed, however. When the interns began the program the common adjective used to describe their fellow interns was "different;" few interns used this word as a descriptor nine months later: Goal descriptors (e.g., ambitious, hard working, and active) and personal descriptors (e.g., open-minded, sociable, and concerned) were more prevalent at that point. By springtime, too, most interns felt that their individual uniqueness rested more on personal and social qualities (e.g., sense of humor, willingness ot work with people, outgoing) than on academic or professional concerns (e.g., commitment to the profession, level of intelligence).

Another major change during their first nine months together was the increasing number of group-centered descriptors (e.g., close-knit, supportive) relative to the use of individual characteristics (e.g., mature, energetic, dedicated) when describing the group. At the beginning of the year, descriptors relating to lack of groupness (e.g., disunion, lack of contact) outnumbered group descriptors (e.g., close-knit) by four to one; by the

spring, that margin had changed as the ratio was reduced to two to one. For most interns, then, the "BIT group" was an evolving category; its members believed their group to be in the process of coalescing as a cohesive entity.

This group was an important source of support during the acclimation phase of the program. As pressures intensified for individual interns, "we're all in this together" became a rallying cry. As one intern observed, "Not only am I under a loan/scholarship that might make me think twice about changing my major, but I realize I have something good. The help of others in the program is vital to my success here. I would really be struggling without them."

Not all interns, however, were convinced of the group's camaraderie. By the second semester, three interns, in fact, felt they were unique because they got along with <u>everyone</u> in the group. Groups within the group formed, causing some to despair over the disunity among the interns.

This involvement with other interns significantly affected intern perceptions about their career choice as well as themselves. Although most interns spoke of a lack of cohesion among the group, their use of more collective descriptors in the spring not only indicated a growing sense of group identity but a keener interest in each others' commitment to teaching and to the program. By the end of the acclimation phase (their third semester), most interns were able, albeit reluctantly, to identify their peers who were either most or least important to the group or who they would most want as teaching colleagues. Interestingly, many of these individuals with whom most of the interns spent the majority of their time were not the individuals considered to be the most attractive professional colleagues.

That is, some of the most important people to the group, for example 246 and 204, were generally not viewed as valuable professional colleagues.

Insert Figure 1 Here

As they neared the end of the acclimation phase of the program (Winter 1985-86), one of the dilemmas voiced by several of the interns was the type and degree of commitment held by others in the program. None of the interns challenged their own commitment to enter the teaching profession. Several, however, questioned the motivations other had for entering the program and their willingness to continue to teach beyond the two year minimum requirement. From the perspective of these interns, not everyone was equally committed to teaching as a career or shared the same motivation for entering the program. Consequently, the image of the program as a group of 17 young persons sharing a common purpose was at odds with their everyday observations.

As the interns began to realize that each of them did not share an equal commitment to either the BIT program or to the profession, doubts about the accuracy of their images of the "Bridenthal Interns" emerged. Adjectives such as "highly intelligent," "interested in teaching," or "highly motivated" became tarnished under careful scrutiny of their daily observations.

The interns coped with the changing image of the group and the program in one of two ways. First, most chose to adopt an "insider-outsider" persepective. Like a family, problems and disagreements were kept within the group. The image the interns conveyed to the public, often times to the research team, and sometimes to Professor Wright was at odds with their own

observations, attitudes, and feelings. The expectations that others had of the program and the commitments made by the interns, themselves, made it more difficult to acknowledge and deal effectively with feelings such as doubts about career choices, fear of failure, or misgivings about the program.

A second coping mechanism adopted by several interns was simply to withdraw--physically or psychologically--from the group. Rather than sharing their misgiving about the program with others inside the program, these interns withheld thoughts and feelings. As one intern remarked, "I must be more cautious of my actions and words around other interns since they may be misinterpreted." The problem, they believed, was within themselves. Conveying their apprehensions to other interns, these individuals thought, would be considered traiterous.

The most important and clearly articulated perception of the interns about the program during the first three semesters was their feeling of "specialness." The program components, discussed later, contributed largely to this feeling of distinction. While the interns enjoyed their feelings of specialness, most were aware of the pressure this attention put on them. For example, when asked at the end of their first year what was the worst statement a person could make about the program, interns expressed their fear that others saw their participation in the program as a waste of time, despite its benefits. Many also worried that others saw their commitment to the program as an abandonment of more worthwhile career goals for the fleeting gratifications (e.g., financial aid, prestige) offered by the program. These "worst statements," interns felt, were attacks on <u>both</u> the program and themselves.

At the end of the acclimation phase, the most negative comments about the program pertained to program features that related to individual interns and the intern group. The apathy of some interns, the decreased attention paid to them by Professor Wright, and their role as recruiters for Calvin College's education department were all annoyances. Interns found it disquieting that there were "jealous overtones" within their group resulting, according to some, from cliquishness or favoritism shown to others by the program's director. Some interns were annoyed with the elitist attitudes held by others--attitudes which cast the interns in an unfavorable light and resulted in their being labelled as the "Bridenthal Brats."

Intern Seminars

In addition to their regular semester course load, the interns enrolled in a one semester hour education seminar. Meeting once a week, this seminar was a critical component during the acclimation phase. "It is a way to keep them together," Wright commented. "They get to know each other. They begin to rely on each other."

Wright led the seminar by probing, prompting, and praising members of the intern group. As one intern, discussing an early session, noted: "He'll say, 'Okay, let's talk teaching.' He expects us to already know some things about teaching. So we start throwing [ideas] in the pot. We start sorting out good teaching, the education field, what's wrong with it and why."

These early sessions focused on criticism of public schooling and current national reform efforts. The interns read, reported, and discussed every major recent publication on educational reform. Each wrote an essay

discussing an educational concern and possible strategies for reform. As the first semester progressed, speakers addressed the class on issues ranging from the state reform legislation and the qualities of a good teacher to demographics and effects of differing tax bases. The interns were expected to think, reflect, and debate on these issues.

Toward the semester's end, seminar sessions were eclipsed by visits to selected schools. At each school, interns listened as community leaders and local educators discussed contemporary educational issues such as career ladders and curriculum revisions. At the end of the first semester, each intern presented a paper about educational reform.

The second semester seminar focused on community education and local reform. Interns analyzed the city's diverse communities and the schools located within them. Midway into the semester, the interns began to amass data about one specific community and school. For some who lived and attended school in the more well-to-do sections of the city, these visits were "a rude awakening."

After these two semester seminars, the interns were more "reform oriented" and more prone to proselytize their impressions of education when describing the program. This shift was accompanied by a more personal and specific description of the program.

At the beginning of their second year, the interns worked in a single classroom with a master teacher at least three hours each week. Employing skills and applying concepts learned in the preceding seminars, the interns began as observers and worked their way through to classroom aides and eventually tutors. In many cases, they were eventually allowed to prepare and

present entire lessons to the class. After hearing and reading so many negative accusations about teaching, the interns generally enjoyed and benefited from becoming a part of this classroom interaction.

By the end of their third semester seminar, the interns had put a considerable amount of thought into their career choice. They were more aware of the teaching process and better read in the public policy issues related to education. The interns also were more aware of the impact of the community and the media on the future of teaching. They believed themselves to have a more realistic image of teaching and expressed a greater confidence that they would succeed in it.

Mentorship

Graduate student mentors were assigned to work with the interns during the first two years. The mentor worked closely with the program's director and served as a kindred intermediary for the interns. A blend of institutional liaison and trusted friend, the mentor assisted interns in their transition into college and kept them on top of their many and varied responsibilities.

A different person held the position of mentor during each of these two years. These mentors played very different roles. During the interns' freshmen year, the mentor generally was described as an efficient, caring, approachable "sister . . . the person behind the scenes who keeps us all together." During the second year, it was nearly impossible for the interns to speak about the role of their new mentor without falling into a comparison with the other. Most interns did not feel as close to their mentor during the second year, believing she was less interested in them and the program.

The mentor served a critical programmatic function during year one as the hub in a wheel spoked with relative strangers. By the beginning of their second year, the interns had adjusted to their new roles and had created bonds among themselves. They were sure of themselves as college students. They considered themselves the veterans of the program and viewed the second mentor as the newcomer.

The most significant mentor, though, was Professor Wright. In addition to directing the program and conducting the weekly seminars, Wright served as academic adviser for many of the interns. Supportive, demanding, and imaginative, Wright, noted one intern, is "our father here in school. He's in charge of everything; he knows everything." Commonly described by the interns as "caring, compassionate, friendly, and accessible," Wright, aware of his charismatic appeal, cultivated this relationship among the group he referred to as "my kids." A relationship he described as "the closest that I have ever been to a group of students."

More than anything else, however, Wright, an activist and a visionary, served as the interns' professional role model; the interns observed first-hand the role of a leader in public education. Professor Wright was seen as an icon of leadership: one who acts upon his convictions, cultivates personal relationships with those holding power, exudes the confidence to influence important decision makers, bypasses bureaucratic constraints, and translates ideas into reality. While Calvin College's academic climate was preparing the interns intellectually and while the educational component was preparing them professionally, Wright was preparing them for their ministerial mission as public school teachers.

There were, of course, costs to such a relationship. "I'm afraid if I don't do well in a class then I am failing to live up to some expectations," one intern confessed. The fear of failing the program and Wright was real to the interns. Another stated: "Dr. Wright seems to expect so much out of us. I would hate to disappoint him." As the interns completed their third semester, mixed feelings also were expressed about the amount of intern interaction with Professor Wright. Some interns appeared convinced that he was increasingly less interested in them. As one intern put it, ". . . we're thrown by the wayside." This sense of neglect was due, in part, to their growing awareness that the professor was a very busy man. While some responded to this perceptual shift in his importance in a negative way, most of the interns reacted in a much more rationalistic way.

Another unusual group of mentors consisted of prominent men and women (e.g., Ernest Boyer) who met with the interns throughout the acclimation period. These public figures, secured through monies available at the college and Wright's personal connections, were a visible reminder to the interns of the importance of the program and those who participated in it. At the end of the first year, most of the interns had become accustomed to frankly discussing educational problems and freely speaking with prominent people.

Interaction in Public Forums

Not only are few education undergraduates able to speak privately with prominent people, but they also seldom have the opportunity to publicly address people who only a short time before had been their classroom teachers. The interns' entry into the public domain was another significant component of this model program.

Many of the interns spoke publicly at conferences and public forums ranging from their state teachers' association conference to the American Association of Colleges of Teacher education conference. At the former conference, for example, 500 educators crowded into an ornate hotel ballroom to listen to three interns discuss the importance of teaching. The impact upon the three who addressed the audience was enormous. "I have a future stake in what I say," recalled one of the interns. "I have never been more proud to be an education major. We took the stage. All I remember after my speech was the earth-shattering applause." The interns also noted the impact upon the audience:

> Many people came up to us after our speech and congratulated us on our fine presentation. They were proud we were joining the field of education. One woman said we gave her confidence. She was glad to know that people like us would be entering the field when she's retiring.

By the end of the acclimation phase, most interns had participated in at least one public forum, and several had journeyed to three or more conferences, speaking in all parts of the country. Recalling each of these speaking engagements, interns noted they delivered a "message of hope" exhibiting a strong sense of pride and enthusiasm for their futures as teachers. They described their audiences as supportive and appreciative. Interns believed they would bring powerful and positive benefits with them to the profession.

Insert Table 2 Here

At the end of their first year, as indicated by Table 2, all but two of those interns who had not seen teaching as a serious long-term commitment (the Converts and the Mavericks) had changed their minds. Each Convert now saw teaching as a viable career, explaining that the Bridenthal experience had allowed them to realize the complexity and challenges of the occupation. Of the three Mavericks who moved, two maintained some reservations about how the public would view them as teachers, but were more ready to defend their future careers. The third member of this group actually shifted perceptions radically, claiming "I have a calling to teach!"

Several interns who had embraced teaching as a long-term career choice as high school seniors (the Traditionalists) showed movement away from this quadrant. Following two semesters of contact with multiple schools and teachers, two former Traditionalists now harbored serious doubts about teaching. The level of long-term commitment appeared to slip with one other intern who described him/herself during the exit interview more as a Reservationist than the Convert that characterized him/her at entry into the program. This intern still saw teaching as a worthwhile career, but exposure to issues, people, and schools had led him/her to feel that it would be "more difficult" and "more serious" than previously imagined. To the degree that the interns within the Reservationist category represent the program's greatest challenge, that challenge had grown.

Some interns not only doubted their own commitments to teaching, but also those of their peers. As one intern remarked, "I've thought about whether all of the interns would make it through the six years. Some seem to be only in it to gain some personal glory. They don't see the real needs of these kids

[in the schools]." Another observed: "I have some deep-seeded doubts that I made the right decision. I presume they will be overcome in time. I am afraid of the feeling. I think of myself as some kind of subversive waiting to be discovered."

At the end of their first year, most interns were strongly considering teaching as a career option though, for many, this commitment was rather weak and viewed as a brief interlude between undergraduate work and another career of graduate study. Although the interns demonstrated greater kowledge about education and more enthusiasm about classroom teaching at the end of their first year, fewer expressed a long-term commitment to teaching than at the beginning of the year. Therefore, while the interns were more likely to conceive of the program as one that gave a special group of people a head start in teaching and provided them with prestige, recognition and honor, in fact, a smaller proportion of their number was now committed to a long-term teaching career than at the outset of the program.

The program also affected their social and academic lives at Calvin College. As "Wright's little interns," to quote one respondent, they received campus notoriety and acknowledgement. Additionally, being an intern required them to juggle their work time, increased their academic requirements, intensified their worry about grades, took them off-campus frequently, and caused a general state of mild academic discomfort. The experience not only broadened their perspectives, knowledge, and attitudes about education, it also enhanced their self-confidence about the wisdom of their career choice. As the interns completed their first year, many of the parents who had indicated reservations voiced greater support for their child's decision. The

vast majority of the interns reported that their parents were grateful for the opportunity the program provided their child to receive special training, to be a part of a unique program, to afford an education at a good school, and to have a secure job future.

TRANSITION FROM ACCLIMATION TO SPECIALIZATION (Spring 1986)

In the spring semester of their second year, the interns were mainstreamed into the standard education curriculum. They attended education courses along side other students who were seriously considering teaching as a career. Most interns enrolled in "Schooling in America" taught by Dr. Wright, and "Growing up in America," taught by another education professor. Both classes were large, with 40 students, 15 of whom were interns. Special program seminars, held weekly during year one, diminished to three gatherings during the third semester and finally disappeared in semester four. What was happening to the BIT program and how were these changes affecting the interns?

The acclimation phase of the BIT program served an important function for these interns. During this period (three semesters) every effort was made to provide these future teachers with a broad array of knowledge and experiences relative to the teaching profession. Beginning with a wide angle lense, interns read, discussed, and wrote about national educational concerns. From there, they focused on statewide issues and reform efforts, and finally they zoomed in on issues confronted by their own city's school districts. Additionally, the interns spent much time microscopically examining a particular school and its community. Throughout this sequence the interns both listened and spoke to powerful educators and lay persons (national

educational reform proponents, state school board personnel, the city's mayor, school superintendents and principals, teachers, students, and school parents) in the schooling process. In short, the Bridenthal Interns underwent what could be called an "extended recruitment" process. The acclimation phase presented, in global terms, many of the school's philosophical, political, and organizational underpinnings; it gave them "the big picture" of their future profession.

As noted, this focus progressively narrowed. During semester three, as interns began to concentrate on single schools, larger philosophical concerns were eclipsed by more discrete, functional ones. Returning to some of the same schools they knew as students, the interns began to see schooling in a new light. Global issues relating to the quality of the teaching force and declining student achievement were seen in juxtaposition to teachers' struggles with curriculum materials, community interests and student motivation. As the acclimation phase began its metamorphosis to the specialization phase, concerns about <u>being an intern</u> were transformed into ones about <u>becoming a teacher</u>. It was at this point that interns began to build a more realistic picture of teachers and teaching.

As the acclimation phase unfolded, the interns were changing in important ways. Two areas in which these changes occurred are particularly important: commitment to teaching and group identity.

<u>Commitment to Teaching</u>

A look at intern movement on the career orientation matrices (Tables 1 and 2) suggests two sets of pervasive feelings among the interns. First, a large majority of the interns (80%) felt, at the conclusion of year one, that

teaching was a good career choice whereas upon entry, almost half (44%) had never seriously considered teaching as a career option. In light of the program's loan/scholarship structure (i.e., monies accrued are repaid should an intern drop out prior to the six year commitment), this movement may not seem unusual. Little evidence of this rationale exists in the first year, however. Instead, students were truly energized about becoming teachers as a result of their involvement in the acclimation phase's first two semesters. This is not surprising given the air of specialness surrounding them and their program.

The more significant movement, however, appears across the axis representing commitment to teaching. Year one's end found more than half (60%) the interns feeling a weak long-term commitment to teaching (five years or more). In light of their comparatively strong long-term commitment at the program's outset (Table 1), this shift suggests that the acclimation phase likely played some part in dampening the interns' long range ideas. There is no way to know with certainty why this shift occurred. Asserting that it was a direct result of the BIT program's first year curriculum is unwarranted. College student life, new relationships, living away from home, normal maturation--all of these factors were present and mentioned as important by the interns. The consequential point, however, is that these seventeen young people were undergoing special grooming as "super teachers" yet their long-term commitment to teaching plummeted after a year in the program.

Entering year two the interns remained positive about their career decisions. By midyear, some voiced strong feelings about certain conditions they hoped to avoid as teachers and a few openly wondered how their career

feelings might be different if "the money" weren't a factor. The question "Can I really do this?" emerged in the data for the first time. Narrowing in scope to the nitty-gritty of classroom teaching, the acclimation phase allowed some interns to question the wisdom of their career decisions. At the same time their prospects for remaining in the classroom five years or more dwindled.

These sentiments might change just as markedly with the development of the specialization phase. As the interns move from their positions of generic future teachers to more intrinsically meaningful self-perceptions of themselves as individual teachers of high school mathematics, special education, or kindergarten. these interns may experience a rekindling of commitment and affinity toward their teaching careers. This very sentiment was reflected in the interview data gathered from interns at the outset of the specialization phase (Winter/Spring 1986). While they recognized the importance and benefits of their frequent practicum experiences, they had become bored with sitting in classrooms and watching student-teacher interactions: they were anxious to teach! Perhaps, once immersed in the specialization phase, these interns may express greater pedagogical zeal.

Group Identity

A second area where the data suggest a noteworthy change in the interns is in their group identity. The rigorous screening process and initial publicity left no doubt in the interns' minds that they were special people at the program's outset. Each entered the BIT program as an individual who had been given this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

By its very nature, the program's first-year curriculum brought the group together. Campus notoriety, national publicity and numerous speaking engagements before local, state, and national gatherings of educators were among the experiences which served to bring a sense of groupness to the Bridenthal Interns. Structural aspects of the program such as weekly meetings and a specially assigned mentor promoted the same end. At the close of their first year, virtually all of the interns identified closely with the group and saw themselves as more like than unlike the group's other members. All were "special people" sharing the dream of becoming a new breed of better teachers. All understood themselves to be public ambassadors-at-large to the teaching profession.

As the acclimation phase progressed, however, this cohesiveness began to decay. During their third semester, the regular meetings disappeared, group activities diminished, and their original mentor was replaced. The group was aware of its disintegration. Fewer opportunities to attend and speak at professional gatherings and a fading conspicuousness as Bridenthal Interns was interpreted differently by the interns. Those activities which defined the interns as a group and validated their sense of specialness, were sorely missed by some. Others, though, recognized these same phenomena as personally liberating. These "liberated" interns to begin the process of defining themselves--both as an individual and as a future teacher. As the interns entered the specialization phase, all were aware of their group's disintegration.

For eighteen months this group identity separated these interns from teachers and those who would be teachers. With the unfolding of the

specialization phase, we anticipate the development of multiple group identities. As the interns are integrated with their campus pre-service teacher education peers, they may define their group to include these fellow students as future colleagues and special people. As they pursue distinctive teaching certificates (kindergarten, elementary, secondary) and acquire discrete subject knowledge (biology, social sciences, etc.), they may develop additional group identities. The extent to which the nature and structure of their BIT program serves to provide opportunities for them to reconstruct the specialness of their original group remains to be seen.

CRITICAL ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS

The Bridenthal Internship in Teaching program raises a variety of critical issues. Some of these issues are programatic in nature, a few are political, and others are ethical. Several of these are outlined below, in question format, for consideration.[8]

1. Recruiting the "brightest and best," stressing their importance and uniqueness, and fostering group identity develops an elitist perspective. Can such individuals effectively deal with the mundane requirements and routines of everyday life in the public schools?
2. Sharing a belief in their "mission" to reform public education may alienate these specially-trained rookies from their teaching colleagues. If they enter the teaching ranks as "saviors," might they find that there is no one willing to be saved?
3. Providing personal services and access to university decision-makers and graduate mentors reduces the routine trials and tribulations of

early college life. Can such services postpone or even eliminate valuable career maturational experiences for these young people?

4. During the acclimation phase, the interns became convinced that teaching was a viable career. Would more people become teachers if they were put in a position to experience the world of teaching? Are there other, less intensive and expensive programs and strategies, whereby this goal of early exposure to high ability students in their formative stages of selecting a career could be achieved?

5. Providing talented students who are unsure of their career choice an easy pathway into public education is an effective recruitment strategy for teacher education. Are such opportunities, however, merely postponing their own inevitable and necessary career decision making processes?

6. Highlighting the academic backgrounds of students such as the interns is good for the image of the teaching profession. Yet, does it also create and perpetuate a separateness between them and their preservice teaching peers which ultimately will undermine the development of an ethic of professional collegiality? Also, might such distinctions, based on academic performance, divert attention from less easily determined personal and social qualities that would contribute, possibly in a more profound manner, to effective classroom teaching?

Based upon the data collected and analyzed during the acclimation phase of the BIT program and summarized in this paper, several conclusions also are warranted:

1) The mechanics of recruiting high school students for teacher preparation are problematic. That is, the typical avenue of contacting high school guidance counselors is largely ineffective.
2) High-achieving high school students who otherwise have not seriously considered teaching as a career option can be successfully enticed into the profession given an appropriately appealing opportunity. In this case, that option included a large, forgivable loan, an opportunity to attend a prestigious institution, and the chance to work closely with an important charismatic educational leader.
3) Specially-designed curricula for immersing future teachers in the culture of schooling through on-going seminars, practica, and opportunities for interaction and dialogue with local, state, and national persons with an interest in education creates, in preservice teachers, a strong affiliation to the profession.
4) The creation of a high-profile group of special students who are proceeding through a teacher education program has many positive and negative benefits. As they mature, members of this group will either work to maintain its cohesiveness or consciously choose to distance themselves from it, depending on their perceptions of themselves and the group as well as their experiences regarding others' perceptions of them and/or the group.
5) To a remarkable extent, the success of this model in acclimating young people to the teaching profession is contingent upon the energy, motivation, and vision of the program's director. Difficulty replicating this component of the program may make implementation of this reform model, on a grand scale, impossible.

6) Those outside the group (e.g., instructors or cohorts) come to realize, in time, that members of the special group are not terribly different than most other "education majors" of similar academic abilities. At other institutions with fewer education majors of similar academic abilities, the integration of the interns may have been quite different.

7) This model has succeeded in ushering young people into the teaching profession with a belief that they can make important changes beyond their own classrooms. It also has succeeded in convincing local and regional school personnel to hold similar beliefs.

8) This model succeeded in providing members of this group with the opportunities and resources necessary for developing an informed perspective on educational issues, a strong commitment to teaching (which is discernibly different than that of "regular" education students), and a notable pride in themselves as prospective teachers.

9) This model, however, raises critical questions regarding the effectiveness and ethics of recruitment of "high quality" students into the teaching profession.

The Bridenthal Interns are now well into the specialization phase of their program. As their journey toward classroom teaching continues, so too, does our research. The importance of this and other experiments in teacheer education reform is self-evident: the benefits to our profession remain to be seen.

FOOTNOTES

1. The names of particular persons and places are fictitious.
2. Recent reports have advocated substantial reforms in teacher education (e.g., Carnegie Task Force, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986, National Commission, 1985).
3. For a complete report of the first year of the program see: Sears, Moyer, & Marshall, 1986. For an overview of the Bridenthal Interns in Teaching curriculum see: Marshall & Moyer, 1987. Newspaper and magazine descriptions of the program include: "Recruiting the best," 1984; American Teacher, 1984; LaFranchi, 1985; Hall, 1984; Ingalls, 1984.
4. For a more complete description of these three phases see, Marshall, J. D., Sears, J. T., Fulton, T., & Otis-Wilborn, A. (in press).
5. For a discussion of the meta-theoretical assumptions guiding this type of inquiry and a more thorough review of the research design, see Sears, Marshall, & Otis-Wilborn, 1986.
6. Survey instruments and interview protocols discussed in this section appear in: Sears, Moyer, & Marshall, 1986; Marshall, Sears, & Otis-Wilborn, 1987.
7. According to Robinson (1951:813), the most concise statement of the process of analytic induction is, first to formulate a rough definition of the phenomenon to be explained, then to develop a hypothetical explanation of that phenomenon. At that point, one case is studied in the light of the hypothesis with the object determining whether the hypothesis fits the facts in that case. If the hypothesis does not fit

the fact, either the hypothesis is reformulated or the phenomenon to be explained is re-defined. Practical certainty may be attained after a small number of cases has been examined, but the discovery by the researcher of a single negative case disproves the explanation thus requiring reformulation of the original hypothesis. This procedure of examining cases, re-defining the phenomenon, and reformulating the hypothesis is continued until a universal relationship is established.

8. These have been discussed in more detail elsewhere: Marshall, Sears, & Otis-Wilborn, 1987; Sears, Marshall, & Otis-Wilborn, 1987.

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